



Every Moment Counts

*In the life of a child through
the first three years*

A CALL TO ACTION

Every Moment Counts- SWWHD

In early spring 2000, Skamania County Commissioner Ed McLarney held up the book *Ghosts From the Nursery - Tracing the Roots of Violence* and charged the Board of Health and staff of the Health District to "do something about this."

Ghosts from the Nursery, co-authored by Robin Karr-Morse and Meredith Wiley, explores new research in the brain development that occurs in children from conception to age three, but affects their lives forever. The nurturing and stimulation a child receives affects the very neural connections of the developing brain. Abuse and neglect in the earliest years can be linked to later violent behavior. At the current rate, one in twenty babies born today will spend part of his or her life in jail -- unless we change the pattern.

The Forum at the Library, a citizen-led group that identifies and arranges programs to foster discussion of community issues, decided in summer of 2000 to jointly sponsor a community forum on early brain development. Partnering as prime sponsors would be the Southwest Washington Health District, Southwest Washington Medical Center, Clark County Department of Community Services, and Clark College.

Southwest Washington Health District (SWWHD), recognizing the public health responsibility for addressing issues of prevention of abuse and neglect in very young children, agreed to coordinate the effort. A broad-based planning group endorsed the plan to invite Robin Karr-Morse and Dennis Maloney, Director of Community Justice in Deschutes Co., OR, to issue the call to action for very young children. Both Karr-Morse and Maloney had been key speakers at other forums in Washington, including the Summer Conference for County Commissioners in June 1999 and the community forum for Clallam and Jefferson Counties. In each case, there was significant and overwhelming response from the communities.

The effort began with five sponsors and funding agencies, but grew to over twenty. Organizations providing staff and/or funding included:

Southwest Washington Health District
Clark Co. Department of Community Services and Corrections
Forum at the Library
Southwest Washington Medical Center Foundation
Public Health and Safety Network
Healthy Steps Women's and Children's Clinic

Educational Service District 112
Community Choices 2010
Success by Six-United Way
Clark College Foundation
ECAP-Headstart/EOC of Clark County
Readiness to Learn Task Force
YWCA
Washington State University-Vancouver
Soroptimists
Hi-School Pharmacy
Interact
Fort Vancouver Regional Library District
DSHS-Juvenile Justice Training Program
The Columbian
American Society For Public Administration, Oregon Chapter
Community Foundation for Southwest Washington
Vancouver Neighborhood Association

Other organizations represented on the planning group included the Clark County Sheriff's office and Clark County District Court.

VISION

Five goals were set by the planning group:

Raise community awareness of the importance of intervention and prevention in the first three years of life.

Utilize recognized experts in the field to describe research on child development from a family focus.

Develop a community plan for early intervention with young families to improve child outcomes.

Target professionals, educators, faith community and families to commit to a plan of action.

Coordinate efforts with CC2010, assets development and early childhood education.

Outcomes expected included:

A community plan for addressing problems in young families early in the child's development.

The plan would address problems upstream; health and well being of children and families will improve.

Identification of areas of responsibility for different segments of the community (health care, private nonprofit groups, churches, early childhood education, childcare providers, etc.).

Commitment from the community to carry out the plan.

An opportunity for bringing new resources to the community for early intervention.

Enhance current efforts to assure Clark and Skamania County children are ready to learn and ready for life.

PLANNING

The planning group of 35 members held bi-weekly planning meetings. Norma Turner, the organizer of "Prevention Works!," the community forum for Clallam and Jefferson Counties in February 2000, attended a meeting to share their experience.

A January 18, 2001 event to focus on early intervention and prevention was planned to kick-off the effort. Robin Karr-Morse, co-author of *Ghosts From the Nursery* agreed to discuss the newest research on neurobiology and brain development. Dennis Maloney, Director of Deschutes County Community Justice, agreed to showcase community juvenile correction programs successfully initiated. An attendance goal was set at 300 participants.

PUBLICITY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Mary Renaud of SWWHD, and Doreen Turpen and James Phelps of Ft. Vancouver Regional Library guided publicity efforts. Matthew Dela Vega, student at Washington State University-Vancouver, was recruited as an intern for this effort. "Save the date" postcards and flyers were distributed several months before the forum. Other publicity included Internet notices to agency mailing lists, press packets and 20,000 four-page flyers distributed throughout the community. *The Columbian* newspaper printed four large announcements.

Publicity contained registration information and a phone number to call if any person needed assistance in transportation, childcare or other expenses in order to attend.

Ft. Vancouver Regional Library System cannot be party to any effort that requires a fee; therefore, participants needed to cover only the cost of an optional lunch.

Continuing education hours were available from Washington State University and for licensed child care providers.

First Presbyterian Church offered its entire building for the event. The sanctuary's seating capacity was 400, the nursery was available for childcare, the basement for a catered lunch, and the classrooms used for small focus groups.

Financing included grants from Southwest Washington Medical Center Foundation, Clark College Foundation, the Community Foundation of Southwest Washington, SWWHD, and Washington State Office of Juvenile Justice.

Ft. Vancouver Regional Library funded printing of the "Save the Date" postcards and the four-page event announcement. Their Graphics Department provided services for mailers.

The Public Health and Safety Network provided a grant for general forum support, plus a grant to support attendance of parents and children. These funds covered lunches, transportation and childcare. ESD 112 provided funding for attendance of students in their teen parent program and contributed to childcare expenses.

Southwest Washington Health District sponsored an internship opportunity with Executive Director Kay Koontz. WSU MPA student Linda Clear assisted in developing and interpreting community input provided the day of the forum and writing the final report. The Oregon Chapter of the American Society For Public Administration awarded its first matching internship grant for this opportunity.

A follow-up session for community participants was set for March 8, 2001 at the YWCA. Action steps would be prioritized and committees formed to accomplish community goals. A mailing would remind participants of that event.

By January 12, over 400 people had registered for the forum and registration was closed, as the number of people wishing to attend exceeded the capacity of the church.

JANUARY 18, 2001 FORUM

Each participant was given a folder collated by community RSVP volunteers. The packet included letters from Governor Locke, Congress Member Brian Baird, the four-page flyer highlighting the Every Moment Counts event, and brief introductory bio's for Robin Karr-Morse and Dennis Maloney. Brochures included Community Choices 2010's Clark County's Profile on Readiness to Learn, SWWHD's Tips for Positive Parenting, The Governor's Commission brochure Ten Simple Ways to Encourage a Child's Ability to Learn and I am Learning In Different Ways from the Clark County Readiness Task Force. Ft. Vancouver

Library provided a list of materials addressing early childhood and a copy of the Port Angeles forum's list of pertinent web sites was included. The Fall/Winter 2000 issue of Newsweek, focusing on child development from birth to 3, was also provided.

SWWHD provided maps displaying community resources by zip code area in Clark County and fact sheets citing information of children 0-3 residing in Clark and Skamania counties.

CLARK COUNTY INFORMATION ON CHILDREN 0-3 YEARS

FACT SHEET

JANUARY 2001

Children in Clark and Skamania Counties

Over 5000 children were born in 1999 in Clark and Skamania counties. The environment to which they are born was well described in the following fact sheets provided by SWWHD.



Demographics



Youth Under 5 Years: An estimated 25,388 young children were under 5 years of age in Clark County during 1999 representing 7.5% of the total county population (337,000). In 2015, the proportion is expected to be similar.

Births: There were 5,185 births to Clark County residents in 1999.

Income/Poverty



Free and Reduced School Lunch: The portion of students in Clark County with free and reduced priced lunches (based on family income) was 27% in 1999-2000. Among school districts, the range was 12% (Hockinson) to almost 40% (Vancouver).

WIC Participation: A minimum of 6,700 Clark County clients per month receive food vouchers for the Women Infants Children nutritional program for low-income pregnant women and young children. At least another 1,000 people are WIC eligible and in need of service.

Education



Mother's Education Level: Education is a surrogate measure for socio-economic status. More children of mothers with low education live in poverty. During 1995-1999, 16% of new mothers did not complete high school (ranging from 13% to almost 40% by zip code).

Childcare



Licensed Childcare Providers: There were 68,000 children under 12 years of age in Clark County in 1996 with more than half of these children living in a single parent home or with two parents who work. At this time, there were only 8,200 child care slots.

Child Health



Low-Birth Weight Children: During 1995-1999, 5% of children born weighed less than about 5.5 pounds.

Childhood Immunization Status: A 1999 survey of children 19-35 months of age found that only 67% were fully immunized for vaccine-preventable diseases.

Teen Pregnancy: The teen pregnancy rate in Clark County was 40.1 per 1,000 during the 1996-1998 period, below the state rate of 49.4 and the national target objective of 50.0 per 1,000.

Unintended Pregnancy: In Washington State (1997), 38% of all pregnancies were unintended (either unwanted or mistimed at time of conception).

Violence



Child Abuse Rates: (Under 18 years old) In 1999 Clark County's child abuse rate was 29.4 per 1,000 children, continuing a sharp decline since the 1994 rate of 42.1 per 1,000. In 1999, the statewide child abuse rate was 38.7 per 1,000. (Child abuse rates include all cases reported to Child Protective Services that are accepted for investigation.)

For further information please call Assessment and Research Unit at (360) 397-8257.

Demographics



Youth Under 5 Years: An estimated 643 persons were under 5 years of age in Skamania County during 1999 representing 6% of the total county population (9,900). In 2015, the proportion is expected to be similar.

Births: There were 134 births to Skamania County residents in 1999.

Income/Poverty



Free and Reduced School Lunch: The portion of students in Skamania County with free and reduced priced lunches was 35% in 1999-2000. Among school districts, the range was 14%(Mount Pleasant) to over 55% (Mill A).

WIC Participation: A minimum of 150 Skamania County clients per month receive food vouchers for the Women Infants Children nutritional program for low-income pregnant women and young children. At least another 50 people are WIC eligible and in need of service.

Education



Mother's Education Level: Education is a surrogate measure for socio-economic status. More children of mothers with low education live in poverty. During 1995-1999, there were 21.5% of new mothers who did not complete high school.

Childcare



Licensed Childcare Providers: There were 1,965 children under 12 years of age in Skamania County in 1996 with more than half of these children (55%) living in a single parent home or with two parents who work. At this time, there were only 104 child care slots.

Child Health

□
Low-Birth Weight Children: During 1995-1999, 5% of children born weighed less than about 5.5 pounds.

Childhood Immunization Status: A 1998 study of young children in Skamania County found that only 60% were fully immunized for vaccine-preventable diseases by 24 months of age.

Teen Pregnancy: The teen pregnancy rate in Skamania County was 32.5 per 1,000 during the 1994-1998 period, lower than the state rate and also the national target objective of 50.0 per 1,000.

Unintended Pregnancy: In Washington State (1997), 38% of all pregnancies were unintended (either unwanted or mistimed at time of conception).

For further information please call Assessment and Research Unit at (360) 397-8257.

Forum participants were given forms to list the best ideas from the day's event and to evaluate the forum. Postcards were to be self-addressed and mailed by the forum at a later date, to remind participants of what they

planned to do individually, with others, and in their community.

Childcare was available as the project of Clark College Early Childhood Development student Billie Trimbo. Care was available only to pre-registered children, to ensure adequate staffing.

A resource room exhibited services available from agencies involved in the planning of the forum.

Kay Koontz, Executive Director of Southwest Washington Health District acted as moderator for the day's program. Clark County Commissioner Betty Sue Morris welcomed participants and called for the community to engage elected officials in implementing the action plan to be developed. Pediatrician John Stirling, a long time member of The Child Protection Team, spoke of his years of experience in working to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Robin Karr-Morse explored the research presented in her book *Ghosts from the Nursery*. The brain develops uniquely in each child, and genetic capabilities are encouraged or destroyed by the nurturing a child does or does not receive from caregivers. Capacity for violence begins in the very brain development of children from 0-3, when the brain's neurons are either forming connections or being destroyed. Multiple and changing caregivers, abuse and neglect can over-develop portions of the brain that search for threats in the environment. That child may later perceive threats that do not exist, and will not have developed other portions of the brain that will permit healthy emotional attachments and empathy.

Dennis Maloney described the development of community justice programs that enable youthful offenders to stay in the community and perform activities of restitution that tie them to the community in constructive ways. Offenders progressed from completing court-ordered hours of community service to volunteering hundreds of hours in community efforts such as Habitat For Humanity. Dollars previously designated for criminal justice now stay in the community and provide effective rehabilitation.

A question and answer session for both key speakers followed. Ft. Vancouver Regional Library arranged a book signing through Barnes and Noble, which sold *Ghosts From the Nursery* as well as other books focused on early childhood. Almost \$300 was received from Barnes and Noble, as they shared the day's profits with the Every Moment Counts effort.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN OF ACTION

Participants then divided into twenty small groups based on zip codes. Two-hour discussions enabled citizens to identify concerns, needs, strategies and action steps. Data analysis staff from SWWHD was available during this time to clarify data. Each group completed a form documenting the discussion and desires of the group.

The final general session enabled one speaker from each small group to present the best ideas generated in their group, to the entire assembly.

Small group forms, forum evaluation forms and discussion sheets were collected from participants and groups as the meeting closed.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

One hundred seven participants completed evaluations of the forum, with 96% indicating the day's event had increased their awareness of the needs of children from prenatal to three. Sixty-two percent indicated increased awareness was significant or fairly significant.

Ninety-three percent indicated their breakout groups had identified at least a few ways to increase services to children in the 0-3 age group.

Almost 92% of those responding stated they supported new resources for prevention activities for families of prenatal to three-year-old children. Provision of more childcare slots for these children was supported by 86%, more facilities by 71%. Over 80% supported the development of volunteer support efforts for new mothers.

Review of participant's recordings of the "Three Best Ideas" in their work group demonstrates the greatest needs and concerns were identified as the following:

1. Marketing: Public education (38 votes)
2. Home visits (34 votes)
3. Collaboration of groups, a task force (25 votes)
4. Identify the issue for the community (22 votes)
5. Childcare (18 votes)
6. Mentoring (16 votes)

(note: not all participants turned in their "Best Three Ideas" forms)

These findings were combined with the forms completed by the recorders in each small discussion group to provide the following picture of community concerns and goals. (Please see detailed listings in Appendix A.)

Concerns Expressed By Participants

Our community has increased in size and mass. Jobs, homes and neighborhoods lack stability, consistency and predictability: we no longer know people in our neighborhoods, there is increased isolation, a "survivor mentality" and lack of ownership of the community. People are afraid to intervene: afraid of lawsuits and retaliation.

Parents spend less time with their children, and do not have extended family support or multiple adults in homes. There is a lack of parenting models, few resources are directed into parenting, and families are not aware of all available resources. Parenting is not supported and our services system is fragmented and suffers high turnover. People are sometimes labeled as "high risk," but we should not always "blame" the parents.

We've shifted resources from education to the judicial system. One in 20 children will spend time in jail during their lifetime. Intervention is too costly and too late. Why has prevention been so hard to sell?

When did we stop caring?

Needs Identified By Participants

We need more money for babies, improved information access, community and voter education.

Parents must anticipate children's needs and give more time to children. We must inspire more personal involvement with youth. Our children need to feel safe in school and we need organized activities after school.

We need respite care.

We must work together: law enforcement, city, county, state and federal officials, businesses, parents, the faith community and neighborhoods. Government must be creative.

Brain development research must be changed into action. We must problem-solve beyond telling parents "you'd better...."

We need a plan.

Strategy and Action Steps

Education was a concern of every breakout group: education of the

community in the long-term effects of the nurturing on brain development, and education of parents to improve parenting and increase nurturing.

Education of the Community

Educate those we interact with in our own lives -- share the message.

Increase community awareness of the importance of 0-3. Inform the community of the correlation between early childhood experiences and the ability of individuals to participate in society in a positive way. Educate legislators and government officials in new brain research findings.

Involve all segments of the community, both public and private, including the faith communities.

Emphasize the human and financial impact of poor nurturing. Prevention efforts such as home visits can be shown to be cost effective.

Educate in multiple communication formats and languages. Messages must be culturally appropriate.

Create a well-trained and supported speaker's bureau.

Provide universal parenting and sex education in our schools. Emphasize brain research findings in children 0-3.

Education of Parents

Most breakout groups called for schools to educate all students in parenting skills.

Parent education should become a normal part of the parenting process, and norms developed regarding parenting expectations. Education must be reality-based, easily accessible and in a variety of formats and sessions.

Educate parents both before pregnancy (e.g. educate couples) and after delivery. Provide brain research findings to existing community parenting classes. Include information on finding and selecting quality childcare.

Build links between schools and parents. Transform schools into information resource centers for neighborhoods. Utilize schools after hours for parenting classes, and classes that support families, such as ESL and computer classes. Build and remodel schools with these uses included in the plans.

Provide resources, such as "First Year" videos to mothers as part of hospital discharge kits.

Support for Families

Recognize and celebrate parenting. Promote parents as their child's first teachers.

Change the "negative image" of resources that exist to help families, such as Children's Protective Services and Department of Human Services. Increase public health services, expansion of early head start and infant services. Acceptance of help should be a norm. Individuality and adaptations must be respected.

Develop easily accessed information and referral support. Create a central number for information and a hotline.

Develop respite care and crisis nurseries.

Develop support groups including Dad's groups, early support for first-time mothers, "Mom's day out" and "parents night out."

Mentoring Programs

Mentor new parents to provide education and support. Draw role models from retirees, religious leaders, seasoned parents and neighbors. Use volunteers creatively.

Support Stay at Home Parents

Support the decision and ability of parents to stay home to nurture children. Value and celebrate these parents, and pay or subsidize them.

Coordination of Community Action

Existing organizations (community resources, service agencies, faith community and law enforcement) must be utilized and collaborate with one another. Identify leaders in each agency, specific goals, and designate a lead agency.

Identify and remove barriers to coordination and form liaisons with larger groups. Include government officials and politicians along with wide community representation.

Assess current resources and programs and compare these with

community needs. Eliminate program gaps.

Child Care

Measure childcare availability. Develop materials and better education for infant providers. Childcare must be developmentally appropriate, quality attachment-based, and include consistent encouragement and accountability. It must be affordable.

Childcare providers must be valued and need to receive a living wage and benefits. Create more informational opportunities and incentives, and defer loans for childcare education.

There should be access to a substitute pool of providers (such as substitute teachers in schools).

Home Visits

Home visitation was addressed by every breakout group.

Expand, extend, de-stigmatize and universalize home visits. Develop standards for visits. Arrange visits to fit the parent's schedule and needs, and include both parents.

Criminal Justice Alternatives

Utilize community and restorative justice rather than criminal justice. Involve the community in justice, including restitution as a preventative.

Redirect funding and support to education and other prevention programs.

Investigate other causes of youth violence, such as mental illness.

There must be community inclusion of offenders. There was a call for the "graceful redemption of wrong-doers."

Business

Provide community support to businesses with family friendly practices.

Identify and promote family-friendly business practices with incentives. Promote provision of childcare and meals by businesses. Encourage development of at-home jobs and access to information.

Utilize policies and benefits identified as family-friendly in recruitment strategies.

Increase availability of business and apartment recreation rooms for after-school child activities.

Build alliances with business to promote their investments in community efforts.

Government

Hold elected and appointed officials accountable for representing community wishes.

Demand elected officials support the community's early childhood needs and activities.

IMPLEMENTING A PLAN

The postcards self-addressed by participants were mailed in late February, along with a notice of the March 8 follow-up meeting. Executive summaries were e-mailed to all on the library's listing.

The first steps in the community action plan were developed on March 8, 2001 at the meeting held at Clark County YWCA. Participants at the Forum were notified of the event by the mailing of a two-page summary of the concerns and needs identified by the focus groups in January.

Kay Koontz, Director of Southwest Washington Health District (SWWHD) welcomed the 60 participants and urged continued work for the development of healthy children, and pledged continued support of the District for this effort. Copies of the preliminary report were distributed and highlighted by Susan Lybarger, Director of Epidemiology, Infectious Disease, Clinic and Parent/Child Health for SWWHD.

The report cited six needs that had been identified by the forum, and volunteers who had agreed to chair committees focusing on each need were introduced: coordination of community action to be chaired by Debbie Ham of ESD 112; public education /marketing to be chaired by Doreen Turpen of Ft. Vancouver Regional Library (FVRL); home visits to be chaired by Mary Renaud of SWWHD; provider education to be chaired by Cheryl Pfaff of Community Choices 2010; child care to be chaired by Laurie Cornelius of Clark College Early Childhood Education; and mentoring, to be chaired by Jessica Kelly, parent. Facilitator Mary Jo Briggs assisted participants in selecting which committee they chose to work with. Each committee was to develop an Action Plan for accomplishment over the next year.

In addition, an advocacy group was formed to assist in securing funding and tying “Every Moment Counts” to other early childhood efforts in the community. It was anticipated that another “Every Moment Counts” Forum would be coordinated in 2002.

Doreen Turpen of FVRL announced that a grant proposal was being developed to support the goals of Every Moment Counts, and any organization wishing to partner with the library for the grant should contact her.

Vancouver Councilmember and Vice Chair of SWWHD Jeanne Harris presented information on developing a “Purple Heart Commission on Healthy Starts for Our Children - Zero to Three” to promote a healthy start for children in Washington.

ACTION STEPS

Every Moment Counts @ Your Library is a project initiated by FVRL with a grant won from the Washington State Library. It demonstrates the partnerships that led to shared resources and expertise as a result of the January Forum. The project addressed every area of need identified by the focus groups, including coordination of community effort, public education/marketing, home visits, provider education, childcare and mentoring.

The grant also addresses four concerns further identified by the focus groups: (1) problem solving beyond blaming parents; (2) building connections between families, community, government and the faith community; (3) improving access to communication and resources; and (4) supporting families. The vision of the project is that every family with a child born in the library district will be described as reading to their babies, being informed on why reading to babies is important, having a library card and knowing how to access library services, and having a book for their baby.

An Early Learning Project Coordinator (early childhood specialist) was hired to increase services of FVRL for children aged 0 to three. The library expanded its “lapsit storytimes” for toddlers and babies, which model behavior for reading to babies and toddlers, for the parents and caregivers. Pilot programs were held at additional branches to identify which serve areas with the highest need for lapsits.

In response to the new research on infant and child brain development presented at the Forum, FVRL expanded its R.E.A.D. (Reading Encouragement Advances Development) curriculum to include services

for ages birth through 3. With community partners, a class is offered as a one-hour program or as a series of up to four weekly classes, teaching parents “how to instill a love of reading in their children.” At the end of each session, each child is allowed to select a book to keep (books provided by First Book and FVRL Foundation). The library provided five sessions of the READ/Brain Development workshops to the Hudson Bay High School teen parent class.

The FVRL website expanded information for parents on reading and early brain development. Tips were offered, as well as links to early childhood development sites.

FVRL provided other training on the importance of reading to and interacting with children at an early age, available library services, tips on engaging children, and modeling appropriate behavior. Those included in training were instructors in the Child and Family Studies Program at Clark College, and the public health nurses of SWWHD. ESD 112 provided marketing and facilities for library staff to reach the over 600 licensed childcare providers of the Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium. The two trainings completed by the end of 2001 qualified for the STARS (State Training and Registry System) certification credit that providers must complete.

Students in the Clark College Child and Family Studies program were offered the Every Moment Counts @ Your Library classes as part of the schedule offered for credit. Students of the Clark College Early Education program were able to work with families in training sessions or in the R.E.A.D. program.

A highlight of Every Moment Counts @ Your Library is an information packet provided to parents of children 0-3. The packets include:

- ☐ Information about the importance of the first three years of life in brain development
- ☐ Parenting information
- ☐ Read-aloud tips
- ☐ Community Baby Resource Guide (English and Spanish in Skamania/Klickitat Counties)
- ☐ Library card application
- ☐ *Read to Your Bunny*, a children’s book
- ☐ A coupon to be exchanged at the library for another book, *Hand Rhymes*.

Requiring parents to come to the library to redeem the coupon enabled staff to personally interact with parents, encourage them to register for a library card, and to assure parents actually know the physical location of a library branch.

An example of shared resource development is that of the Human Services Council, which developed the resource guide, and FVRL, which paid for the printing of the guide. This provided a continued update of the resource guide for the parents of babies, in a format that allows FVRL to print the guides and include them in the packets given to parents and caregivers. FVRL purchased a comparable guide for Skamania/Klickitat counties, in English and Spanish versions.

Community partners assist in identifying effective ways to distribute packets to expectant and new parents. These include Southwest Washington Medical Center (SWWMC), Klickitat Valley Hospital in Goldendale, Hood River Memorial Hospital, and Skyline Hospital in White Salmon. The Clark County YWCA, a provider of services to homeless families and victims of domestic abuse, advertises the program throughout its communication network.

Public health nurses of Southwest Washington Health District complete approximately 1500 home visits yearly to 600 families with newborns. In these one-on-one visits, nurses are able to provide information and model reading behavior. Additional families with young children are served through the SWWHD clinics, outreach services and the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program.

The SWWHD has also presented information regarding early brain development to the Kiwanis Club, Hazel Dell Lions Club, and WSU-Vancouver nursing students.

CONTINUED COMMUNITY ACTION STEPS

Kay Koontz, SWWHD Executive Director and WSU-Vancouver MPA student Linda Clear presented information on the community-wide Every Moment Counts initiative to two classes at WSU-Vancouver. Discussion included the importance of early brain development, community recommendations and partnerships in the effort.

A year after the first Every Moment Counts Forum, letters and e-mails were sent to participants, asking how the Forum helped impact the life of a child -- through individual efforts, with others, or as part of the larger community.

Responses received indicate the multiple and varied ways in which the needs identified by the focus group participants have been addressed. Participants who regularly work with students wrote they had been energized in their work and commitment to the lives of children in SW Washington. There was the hope that the event would again be available for the public, as it sent a powerful message to under-represented individuals, "that their experience does matter."

Another wrote "This is the first meeting which I have attended that has drawn an audience from the school sector. I believe there is a strong need for better communication among community agencies and the schools."

As noted earlier, home visitation was addressed by every focus group at the January Forum. One response detailed the Home Visitor Support Group that has been created, with participating members from DSHS, EOC of Clark County, the Vancouver School District, Southwest Washington Health District and ESD 112. This group, while maintaining strict client confidentiality, supports one another and recognizes how isolating home visits can be. Resources and possible strategies are shared, and there is an interest in coordinating trainings.

Continued community action is occurring in multiple areas of parent and professional education. Southwest Washington Medical Center staff applied for and received a grant to expand brain development training materials for the nursing staff. New contacts were made with other people in the community providing education services to new mothers and efforts are being made to increase information for all new mothers.

The Healthy Steps Women's and Children's Center modified its Childbirth and Parenting Curriculum to include more early parenting, nurturing and brain development information.

The College of Nursing at Washington State University-Vancouver is moving forward with plans to expand their program to include the training of graduate level child and adolescent psychiatric nurse practitioners.

Vancouver School District sponsored ten teen parents at the Forum, and followed-up with discussions and videotapes. Evergreen School District reported sharing the information on brain development with their teen parents.

Columbia River Mental Health Agency clients attended the Forum and are sharing information with other mothers who have suffered abuse and/or neglect in their own childhoods. They are working together to develop secure attachments to their own children.

The Klickitat County Health Dept. dedicated funds to address the issue as part of violence prevention. Forty copies of *Ghosts from the Nursery* were purchased and given to county officials and counseling staff, plus fifteen were added to the Goldendale Library. Funds were used to purchase multivitamins with folic acid to give to women in their reproductive years who are not on birth control, and prenatal vitamins with folic acid were purchased for clients who are pregnant, to promote good prenatal brain development.

The biographies and contact information of the Every Moment Counts speakers were given to the National Association of School Nurses, along with the recommendation that they be considered as speakers at a national conference.

EVERY MOMENT COUNTS – YEAR 2

The second annual Every Moment Counts event was held on May 10 and 11, at the ESD 112 office. Sixty-four parents and professionals, including social workers, teachers, nurses, and librarians, attended the two-day training conducted by Victoria Tennant of the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (C.H.E.F.), which receives funds and assistance from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Family Support America. Participants were trained as “Healthy Beginnings” facilitators, who can provide workshops and consultations for community groups and individuals.

This effort expanded and deepened the early childhood development expertise of community members who are providing area services. A speaker’s bureau is being developed by SWWHD, in which community groups can schedule a trained facilitator to speak on the importance of early childhood education and specific actions that can be taken. The goal has been to leverage resources by training as many as possible, with the idea that they will be able to take the information to their sphere of influence, whether it is a group, individuals or policy makers.

A second Every Moment Counts @Your Library grant was received from the Washington State Library. The second year will concentrate on reaching child care providers who work with non-English speaking families (focusing on Russian, Spanish, and Chinese speaking families) and developing resource kits to support lapsit programs in the libraries. Every Moment Counts @ Your Library has also received a SWIFT matching grant, with the matching funds provided by the Friends of Vancouver Community Library. The grant will purchase books and videos on parenting and child development.

The Health and Safety Network formed the SELF (Support for Early Learning and Families) task force that included EOC, Clark College, Washington State University-Vancouver, ESD 112 and SWWHD. It has grown to include the additional community partners of FVRL, Children’s Home Society, Vancouver Children’s Therapy Center, and Columbia River Mental Health. The SELF task force has won a planning grant from the Foundation on Early Learning in addition to a United Way grant to supply a mental health consultant for child care centers. They are now applying for a \$700,000 grant to set up model child care sites to serve as labs for students.

Appendix A



EMC eval-for
distribution.xls



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the first three years*

A CALL TO ACTION

In early spring 2000, Skamania County Commissioner Ed McLarney held up the book *Ghosts From the Nursery - Tracing the Roots of Violence* and charged the Board of Health and staff of the Health District to "do something about this."

Ghosts from the Nursery, co-authored by Robin Karr-Morse and Meredith Wiley, explores new research in the brain development that occurs in children from conception to age three, but affects their lives forever. The nurturing and stimulation a child receives affects the very neural connections of the developing brain. Abuse and neglect in the earliest years can be linked to later violent behavior. At the current rate, one in twenty babies born today will spend part of his or her life in jail -- unless we change the pattern.

The Forum at the Library decided to jointly sponsor a community forum on early brain development. Partnering as prime sponsors were Southwest Washington Health District (SWWHD), Southwest Washington Medical Center (SWWMC), Clark County Department of Community Services, and Clark College. SWWHD agreed to coordinate the effort, and a broad-based planning group invited Robin Karr-Morse and Dennis Maloney (Director of Deschutes Co., OR Community Justice) to issue the call to action for very young children.

This community effort quickly grew to include over twenty organizations providing staff and/or funding/services. These included:

Southwest Washington Health District; Clark Co. Department of Community Services and Corrections; Forum at the Library; SWWMC; Public Health and Safety Network; Healthy Steps Women's and Children's Clinic; Educational Service District 112; Community Choices 2010; Success by Six-United Way; Clark College Foundation; ECAP-Headstart/EOC of Clark County; Readiness to Learn Task Force; YWCA; Washington State University-Vancouver; Soroptomists; Hi-School Pharmacy; Interact; Fort Vancouver Regional Library District; DSHS-Juvenile Justice Training Program; *The Columbian*; American Society For Public Administration, Oregon Chapter; Community Foundation for Southwest Washington; First Presbyterian Church; and Vancouver Neighborhood Association.

Other organizations represented on the planning group included the Clark County Sheriff's office and Clark County District Court.

On January 18, 2001, a capacity crowd of Clark and Skamania county citizens joined in learning from the experience of pediatrician John Stirling, M.D., in working to prevent child abuse and neglect. Robin Karr-Morse highlighted brain research that indicated genetic capabilities are encouraged or destroyed by the nurturing a child does or does not receive from caregivers. Capacity for violence begins in the very brain development of children from ages 0-3, when the brain's neurons are either forming connections or being destroyed. Dennis Maloney, Director of Community Justice in Deschutes County, OR described their community justice programs that enable youthful offenders to stay in the community and perform activities of restitution that tie them to the community in constructive ways. Dollars previously designated for criminal justice can stay in the community and provide effective rehabilitation.

After the presentations, citizens divided into twenty small zip code-based groups and identified the following concerns, needs, strategies, and action steps:

Childcare must be developmentally appropriate, quality attachment-based, and include consistent encouragement and accountability. Provide appropriate materials and better education to infant caregivers. Value childcare providers, pay a living wage and benefits, and develop access to a substitute pool of providers. Childcare must be affordable.

Parent Mentoring and Education is needed. There is a lack of support for parenting: a lack of parenting models and resources. Mentor new parents to provide education and support. Develop easily accessed information and referral support. Teach reality-based parent education in schools to all students. Provide new brain research findings to existing community parenting classes. Transform schools into information resource centers for neighborhoods.

Coordination of Community Action is needed among existing organizations (community resources, agencies, the faith community and law enforcement) to maximize available services. Assess current resources and eliminate program gaps. Utilize community and restorative justice, rather than criminal justice.

Public Education/Marketing is needed for implementation of brain research findings. Emphasize the correlation between early childhood experiences and the ability of individuals to participate in society in a positive way. Educate in multiple communication formats and languages. Create a well-trained and supported speaker's bureau. Provide community support to businesses with family friendly practices. Hold community officials accountable for supporting the community's early

childhood needs and activities. Inspire more personal involvement with youth.

Our Community Implements the Plan

The forum led to multiple and continuing efforts in our community, with coordination of efforts among agencies and volunteers.

- Fort Vancouver Regional Library obtained grants from the Washington State Library to increase services for families with children aged 0-3. Classes are given to parents to aid them in developing a love of reading in their children. Information packets are given to parents, and include a free children's book, a coupon that can be exchanged at the library for another children's book, a library card application, a community resource guide for parents of infants, and information about the importance of the first three years of life in brain development. A model of community agency coordination, the resource guide was developed by the Human Services Council, and FVRL paid for the printing of the guide. The packets are distributed by multiple care providers, including Southwest Washington Medical Center, Klickitat Valley Hospital, Hood River Memorial Hospital and Skyline Hospital, as well as SWWHD Parent Child Health staff. Clark County YWCA advertises the program through its communication network. The library works with other community agencies, such as Clark College and Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium to train childcare providers in the importance of reading to and interacting with children at an early age. Public Health Nurses of Southwest Washington Health District model reading behavior and give the packets to families in the course of their approximately 1500 home visits yearly to 600 families with newborns.
- A Home Visitor Support Group, initiated by an Every Moment Counts subgroup, meets monthly to share resources and strategies in mentoring parents.
- Southwest Washington Medical Center staff applied for and received a grant to expand brain development training materials for nursing staff.
- Klickitat County Health Dept. purchased 40 copies of *Ghosts From the Nursery* for county officials and counseling staff. An additional 15 copies were added to the Goldendale Library. Multi-vitamins with folic acid were purchased for women in their reproductive years who are not on birth control, and prenatal vitamins with folic acid were purchased for clients who are pregnant, to promote good prenatal brain development.
- Sixty-four parents and community professionals received two days of training in May 2002, as "Health Beginnings" facilitators who can provide workshops and consultations regarding early childhood development. A speaker's bureau is

being developed by SWWHD, to provide trained facilitators to speak on the importance of early childhood education.

- The Health and Safety Network formed the SELF (Support for Early Learning and Families) task force that included EOC, Clark College, Washington State University-Vancouver, ESD 112 and SWWHD. It has grown to include the additional community partners of FVRL, Children's Home Society, Vancouver Children's Therapy Center, and Columbia River Mental Health. The SELF task force has won a planning grant from the Foundation on Early Learning in addition to a United Way grant to supply a mental health consultant for child care centers. They are now applying for a \$700,000 grant to set up model child care sites to serve as labs for students.

If you or your organization wishes to become involved in this community effort, please contact Kim Conner of the Health and Safety Network at 694-6577.

A speaker trained in early childhood development is available to speak to parents, caregivers and community organizations. To request a speaker, please contact Southwest Washington Health District or send an e-mail to EMC@SWWHD.WA.Gov.